Sophia For Teachers

https://www.sophia.org

What is it?
Sophia is a complete online educational resource offering multiple tutorials on STEM subjects. There are also links that use online learning that offer college credit sponsored by Capella University ($329).

Sophia offers free flipped class professional development endorsed by Capella University and created in collaboration with their School of Education faculty.

There are series of tutorials for online classroom use. Users can also create their own series of tutorials, playlists, or groups.

How can it benefit faculty?

SOPHIA is a first-of-its-kind social education platform created to reach 21st century students: digital natives who grew up with Facebook, Wikipedia and YouTube in a highly interactive and personalized digital world. Sophia is focused on letting people share their knowledge by creating lesson packets that are then made available to all. These lesson packets can include everything from text and images to videos and audio clips found on sites like Wikipedia, YouTube and Facebook.

Instructors could create lesson packets using SOPHIA and link from Blackboard.

Library Aims To Support Distance Learning

The ISU Library’s mission regarding distance learning support: It is the responsibility of Indiana State University Library to provide access to library materials and databases to ISU students no matter where they take a course.

We also have an obligation to support distance instructors. With that in mind, Marsha Miller, one of the Reference Instruction Librarians, is serving as the distance learning support ‘point person’. You and your students receive periodic e-mails from her and she is also in charge of the Distance Extravaganza that co-exists with the on-campus Library Extravaganza each year.

The main access point to the Library’s distance learning support is one of the Library’s LibGuides [library research guides], located at http://libguides.indstate.edu/distancelearning.

You may wish to add a Blackboard ‘Content’ button directly to this site for you and your students. Marsha has just started building a separate ‘page’ [tab], “Distance Instructor Support”.

While the Library has had electronic publications for years, most of those were electronic Reference books. Now the Library is purchasing more e-books, from Ebscohost and ebrary. If instructors would like to recommend purchase of e-books, they can send Marsha a title and an ISBN (or electronic ISBN or Amazon link) for consideration to purchase. Marsha also plans to increase e-book holdings on distance learning pedagogies.

Finding e-books is as simple as using the Library’s online catalog [Fusion, available at http://fusion.indstate.edu]. E-books will be listed alongside other library materials. ISU users need to follow the links to ISU copies specifically, not e-books listed as being in the other libraries included in Fusion. An alternative to using Fusion is to start with the Library’s Electronic Resources portal [available at http://library.indstate.edu/eresources.html].

Users can set up parameters using the gold-colored search box to search for e-books. However, you can only search by words in a title, not subject, table of contents, etc.

Once an e-book is found, can you open it, link to it, assign a chapter to be read by students? How many people can open the e-book simultaneously?—

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Khan Academy

http://www.khanacademy.org/

What is it?
Sal Khan, former hedge fund analyst and creator of the nonprofit Khan Academy, has made over 2,700 free educational videos and aims to continue until the day he dies. Hoping to make several tens of thousands of videos available in nearly every subject, Khan Academy currently covers K-12 math, and science topics like biology, chemistry, cosmolgy, astronomy, and physics. The site also dabbles in finance and history, and a recent partnership with Smarthistory added hundreds of art history videos to the library. The content is made in "digestible 10 to 20 minute chunks," and students are encouraged to complete practice exercises and assessments. The videos are done in a conversational style, taking a different approach to math and science instruction than most are used to.

How can it benefit faculty?
Indiana State University professors can enhance their students' overall classroom experience by incorporating a multimedia approach into their lesson plans. When in need of a video, professors can use Khan Academy as a resource to draw material from. As earlier mentioned, the videos Khan Academy has to offer vary greatly in subject, allowing for professors to have a wide selection to choose from when trying to find a video that best matches their current lesson.

Library Support Continued...

Can an e-book be 'checked out'? Do you need to download additional software? Can you read it on an e-reader [e.g. Kindle or Nook], or do you have to read it on your PC? What about an iPad? Can you ‘save’ a favorite e-book in within Ebscohost or ebrary on an e-bookshelf? Can you print? How do you cite? So many questions!

Now that the Library has more than 100,000 e-books, more and more people are curious. The Library has the answers to some of these questions in a document, “e-Books @ ISU: what, where, how”, which is available within several of the LibGuides, including the Distance Learning >> Distance Instructor Support page. If issues arise with e-books, contact Marsha at marsha.miller@indstate.edu so she can investigate.

What about streaming media? The Library subscribes to Films on Demand. You can find this listed on the A-Z databases list [http://library.indstate.edu/databases]. If you want to create a link to this database, copy the shortcut on the A-Z page; don’t copy the URL after you have opened Films on Demand. Each complete film or segment has a permanent URL you can add to your Blackboard site. can send your students a link to a Playlist or just add the link to your Blackboard site.

What about embedding a film or segment? Is it the same as embedding YouTube or other publicly available media? Yes and no. As with our other ISU-only subscription-based resources, off-campus users must authenticate access.

A Blackboard link to a Films on Demand or segment URL by a distance learner will first open the proxy server page. Users must enter their ISU ID and password to continue. Though the process differs from embedding publicly available media, Blackboard is also equally as capable of embedding a Films on Demand film.

Welcome to Extended Learning, Cynthia Stong!

Extended Learning is pleased to announce that Cynthia Stong will be joining our staff as the Degree Completion Recruiter beginning April 15th. Her role is to assist those departments offering online bachelor degree completion programs with their recruiting efforts. Cynthia comes to Indiana State with considerable recruiting non-traditional students. She most recently was on the staff at the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago.
Quality Matters Offers strategic Tools For Online/Hybrid Courses

Written By: Drew Taylor

Quality Matters is a course-review management system established ten years ago by MarylandOnline, Inc., which consists of a group of college and universities who joined together to work toward managing the quality challenges faced by early online courses. This group continues to work to assist with these challenges today. According to the company’s website, they have “trained over 14,000 faculty and instructional design staff”. The Quality Matters program consists of three main components: the Quality Matters Rubric, a Peer Review Process, and professional development. The rubric is essentially a tool to ensure eight standards of course development align.

These eight standards include: Course Overview, Objectives, Assessment, Instructional Materials, Learner Engagement, Course Technology, Learner Support, and Accessibility. The rubric is intended for use with those courses offered completely or largely online. The rubric offers an effective tool for course organization to help maximize the student learning experience.

Once faculty members have built their courses using the rubric, the courses are then submitted to Quality Matters for a peer review process. This process offers instructors an opportunity for a team of peers to review their course design and offer constructive suggestions. The peer review team reviews the course from a student perspective with the goal to ensure rigorous quality standards are met in all aspects of course design. Once a course is approved, it will be added to Quality Matters online course registry.

Finally, faculty members are given access to a variety of professional development opportunities. Quality Matters offers professional development workshops which have been developed to assist faculty members in designing courses which successfully meet the standards included in the rubric. In addition, workshops and training are also available which offer assistance in online instructional strategies. Workshops are offered online, or onsite training sessions may be arranged as well.

As a member of the Quality Matters program, faculty will also gain access to an online community of colleagues. This community includes everything from job listings to conference notifications. In addition, faculty will also receive access to an online research library.

Indiana State University currently utilizes the Quality Matters process with Bachelor’s level degree programs. However, this process is available for other programs as well. For more in depth information and research regarding the Quality Matters program, individuals should visit http://www.qmprogram.org/.

MERLOT: An Online Community Fostering Innovative Teaching Strategies

MERLOT is a free and open online community of resources designed primarily for faculty, staff and students of higher education from around the world to share their learning materials and pedagogy. MERLOT is a leading edge, user-centered, collection of peer reviewed higher education, online learning materials, catalogued by registered members and a set of faculty development support services. MERLOT’s strategic goal is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by increasing the quantity and quality of peer reviewed online learning materials that can be easily incorporated into faculty designed courses. Through using MERLOT, professors will also have access to a communities feature, which will allow for them to examine different teaching strategies for their course from numerous like-minded professionals.